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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**Cal Poly Achieves "Holy Grail" of Flower Judging
(Flower Judging Team Wins Fourth Straight Title)**

SAN LUIS OBISPO - Cal Poly Professor Virginia Walter and her Cal Poly Flower Judging Team won the National Intercollegiate Flower Judging Competition for the fourth year in a row. Cal Poly has won this contest 10 times in the last 16 years of competition.



***Top row (L-R): Michaela Vanoni and Layci Gragnani. Bottom row (L-R)
Jon-Paul Williams, Audrey Chaney, Elizabeth Bledsoe, and Professor Virginia Walter***

Team member Audrey Chaney was awarded top judge in the country with an average score of 95 percent. She was also awarded best cut flower judge with an almost perfect 100 percent average. Michaela Vonani, another Cal Poly team member, was voted third best judge in the country with a 94 percent average. Cal Poly's team earned a total of 7,855 point out of a possible 8,400 for an average score of 93.51 percent. This year's win is significant because of a contest rule that state students cannot compete more than once during their collegiate career.

The contest consisted of 28 different judging classes: 14 fresh flower classes and 14 potted flowering or foliage classes. An independent panel of experts and professionals from across the nation determined the first, second, third and fourth best entries in each class. Awards were based on quality standards for each product being judged by the students.

Additionally, the Cal Poly judging team took top honors at a separate flower design competition that was part of the three-day event. Chaney was awarded first place for her inside-out vase centerpiece; Elizabeth Bledsoe of Bakersfield took first for her topiary design; Layci Gragnani of Kerman placed second with her door swag; and Michaela Vanoni of Somis placed second with her hand-tied bouquet.

The 64th Annual Intercollegiate Floral Crop Quality Evaluation Contest was held at the University of Illinois Champaign-Urbana .

This year's team members included Chaney of Atascadero; Bledsoe from Bakersfield ; and Michaela Vonani, of Somis . The alternate was Layci Gragnani from Kerman . Coach Walter of the Horticulture and Crop Science Department was assisted by student Jon-Paul Williams of San Diego .

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